

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
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AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USMISSION SINAI
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EG, IS, UR
SUBJECT: SOVIET PRESS ON LEEDS CONFERENCE

1. REPORTS FROM LONDON IN THE JULY 21 SOVIET PRESS
ON THE LEEDS CONFERENCE STRESS THAT EGYPT AND ISRAEL
WERE AS FAR APART AS EVER DESPITE SADAT'S CONTINUING
CONCESSIONS TO AN UNCOMPROMISING BEGIN AND A
MORE CONSPICUOUS U.S. ROLE. PRAVDA CORRESPONDENT
OVCHINNIKOV WRITES THAT THE "MEAGER" RESULTS OF THE
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"BOGGED DOWN DIALOGUE" ARE EPITOMIZED BY THE TWO
FOREIGN MINISTERS' INABILITY TO DECIDE WHETHER THE
TWO-DAY MEETING CONSTITUTED "DIRECT" NEGOTIATIONS
OR NOT. ACCORDING TO OVCHINNIKOV THE ATMOSPHERE
IN LEEDS CASTLE WAS ESPECIALLY STRAINED BECAUSE OF
THE ISRAELI CABINET "SCANDAL" SURROUNDING WEIZMAN'S
SALZBURG MEETING AND THE STATEMENT FROM THE

EGYPTIAN DELEGATION IN KHARTOUM THAT FURTHER BILATERAL CONTACTS WOULD BE USELESS UNLESS TEL AVIV RESPONDS TO THE NEW EGYPTIAN PROPOSAL. THE PRAVDA CORRESPONDENT CITES UNNAMED LONDON OBSERVERS TO EFFECT THAT THE U.S. IS BY NO MEANS LIMITING ITSELF TO A MEDIATOR'S ROLE BUT IS BEGINNING "EVER MORE ACTIVELY TO DICTATE ITS WILL TO THE PARTIES IN THE CONFLICT."

2. TASS REPORTS FROM LONDON THAT THE STATEMENTS OF THOSE PARTICIPATING IN THE LEEDS "TRILATERAL" MEETING DEMONSTRATE THAT THE "MECHANISM OF ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN CONTACTS CONSTRUCTED IN WASHINGTON" TO MAKE A SEPARATE MIDDLE EAST DEAL "CONTINUES TO SPIN ITS WHEELS." ACCORDING TO TASS, ISRAEL, RELYING ON U.S. SUPPORT AND WEAPONRY, DICTATES ITS CONDITIONS AND SADAT RETREATS. TASS ADDS THAT THE SECRETARY INTENDS TO GO TO JORDAN AND SAUDI ARABIA IN AUGUST TO TRY "TO EXPAND THE CIRCLE OF PARTICIPANTS IN THE SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS."

3. COMMENT: SADAT'S ALLEGED PROPENSITY TO COMPROMISE AND RETREAT ON ALL QUESTIONS UNDER ISRAELI PRESSURE IS A FAMILIAR SOVIET THEME. COMMENTS FROM ARAB PAPERS TO THIS EFFECT ARE OFTEN RUN ALONGSIDE SOVIET REPORTS. WHEN SOVIET CORRESPONDENTS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PONDENTS IN TURN MAINTAIN THAT NO PROGRESS IS BEING ACHIEVED IN BRIDGING THE EGYPT-ISRAELI GAP (AND THE TWO CANNOT EVEN AGREE ON WHETHER LEEDS WAS A "DIRECT" NEGOTIATION OR NOT), THERE IS AN INCONSISTENCY WHICH EVEN THEY -- AS ADEPT AS THEY ARE IN MANIPULATING WORDS -- HAVE TROUBLE OBSCURING. THE SOVIET MEDIA'S OBJECTIVE REMAINS THE SAME, HOWEVER: TO DISCREDIT SADAT, WHO INCREASINGLY COMES IN FOR MORE CRITICISM THAN BEGIN, AND TO UNDERSCORE THE FUTILITY OF "SEPARATE NEGOTIATIONS" OUTSIDE THE GENEVA FRAMEWORK. MATLOCK

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